

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 356
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Belle Meade Mansion on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of its construction and the Nashville Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its organization.

WHEREAS, on April 17, 1786, Daniel Dunham received a 640 acre land grant from the State of North Carolina for land bordering both sides of Richland creek; and

WHEREAS, Dunham built a cabin and an outpost next to an Indian trail that would soon be known as the Natchez Trace in the western territory of the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, from 1795 to 1800 Dunham's Station would be rented and operated by pioneer Benjamin Joslin for mail service from Nashville to Natchez along the old Indian trail; and

WHEREAS, in February 1807 Dunham's son sold the cabin and 250 acres of land on the east side of Richland Creek in Davidson County of the State of Tennessee to Virginian John Harding; and

WHEREAS, John Harding and his wife Susannah Shute added to the cabin while raising three children, Amanda, William Giles and Elizabeth; and

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WHEREAS, John Harding through industry and investment would increase his holdings into an agrarian empire, and later, through his son, into a world renown Thoroughbred stud farm; and

WHEREAS, in 1820 John Harding would relocate his family across the "beautiful meadow" to a new Federal style home he called Belle Meade; and

WHEREAS, John Harding would in 1939 turn over the operation of Belle Meade to his son William Giles Harding, who had already proven himself an astute businessman and planter; and

WHEREAS, William Giles Harding would rebuild and expand his father's home in the Greek Revival style in 1853, a home that was said to be "bold in silhouette, broad in proportion, and simplified in detail; and

WHEREAS, William Giles Harding would expand Belle Meade's holdings to 5,400 acres used primarily for agrarian and commercial endeavors and for the advancement of the Thoroughbred horse industry in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, William Giles Harding developed Belle Meade into the preeminent Thoroughbred stud farm and nursery of the nineteenth century through the science of selective breeding; and

WHEREAS, Belle Meade gained its preeminence through the success of sires at stud like Jack Malone (1867-1872), Vandal (1870-1872), Bonnie Scotland (1873-1879), Great Tom (1879-1899), Enquirer (1880-1895), Bramble (1882-1891), Iroquois (1887-1899) and Luke Blackburn (1883-1804); and

WHEREAS, William Giles Harding's legacy as one of America's most successful breeders is secured by the bloodlines established at Belle Meade through Bonnie Scotland and other famous Thoroughbreds that continue a legacy of speed and endurance dominating modern racing; and

WHEREAS, Belle Meade was purchased in March 1953 by the State of Tennessee and conveyed in trust to the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities (APTA) to hold for the use and benefit of the State of Tennessee and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Chapter of APTA was established in October 1952, and accepted the property after its purchase in 1953 for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, it is the Nashville Chapter of APTA's mission to preserve and interpret the historical value of Belle Meade Plantation and to educate the public about its significance in American culture; and

WHEREAS, Belle Meade's historic property, buildings and artifacts present a remarkable 200 years of Tennessee history and architecture; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this General Assembly recognizes the 150th anniversary of the construction of Belle Meade Mansion and the 50th anniversary of the organization of the Nashville Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities and commends the organization for its preservation and interpretation of the historic property for the public's education and enjoyment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.